

Bullying

The **Who's**, The **Clues**,
and **Tips** You Can Use



THE WHO'S

The five states with the highest rates of reported bullying instances for kids in grades K through 12 are¹:

1. California
2. New York
3. Illinois
4. Pennsylvania
5. Washington

77% OF ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES K THROUGH 12 HAVE BEEN BULLIED AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES.

Of those children, **14%** claimed to have experienced severe reactions to their ordeal.

About **90%** of children in grades 4 through 8 have reported incidents of being bullied.

23% OF STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT BULLYING INCIDENTS ON A REGULAR BASIS.

The incidence of fighting is typically twice as high in the lower grades.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN HALF OF SCHOOL BULLYING INCIDENTS ARE NEVER REPORTED.

WHY STUDENTS BECOME BULLIES²

Students who bully ...

- ➡ have strong needs for power and (negative) dominance
- ➡ find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students.
- ➡ are often rewarded in some way for their behavior with material or psychological rewards.

TYPES OF BULLYING²

1. Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and bad names
2. Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
3. Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
4. Bullying through lies and false rumors
5. Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
6. Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
7. Racial bullying
8. Sexual bullying
9. Cyber bullying (via cell phone or Internet)

THE CLUES³

- ➡ Your child may act differently than normal
- ➡ Seem anxious
- ➡ Changes in sleeping habits
- ➡ Not doing/enjoying things that they had previously enjoyed
- ➡ Moody or more easily upset
- ➡ Avoidance of certain situations

Kids that are bullied are often embarrassed, feel that they are to blame, and/or are afraid that telling an adult would result in worsening the situation.

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TIPS YOU CAN USE

Strategies for Parents³

- ⇒ Praise your child for being brave enough to talk about it. Remind your child that he or she isn't alone — a lot of people get bullied at some point.
- ⇒ Emphasize that it's the bully who is behaving badly — not your child. Reassure your child that you will figure out what to do about it together.
- ⇒ Advise kids not to respond to bullying by fighting or bullying back. It can quickly escalate.
- ⇒ Encourage your kids to get together with friends that help build their confidence. Help them meet other kids by joining clubs or sports programs.

Strategies for Kids³

- ⇒ Avoid the bully and use the buddy system.
- ⇒ Hold the anger. It's natural to get upset by the bully, but that's what bullies thrive on. It makes them feel more powerful. Practice not reacting by crying or looking red or upset.
- ⇒ Act brave, walk away, and ignore the bully. Firmly and clearly tell the bully to stop, then walk away. By ignoring the bully, you're showing that you don't care. Eventually, the bully will probably get bored with trying to bother you.
- ⇒ Talk about it. Talk to someone you trust, such as a guidance counselor, teacher, sibling, or friend.
- ⇒ Remove the incentives. If the bully is demanding your lunch money, start bringing your lunch. If he's trying to get your music player, don't bring it to school.

The key to helping kids is providing strategies that deal with bullying on an everyday basis and also help restore their self-esteem and regain a sense of dignity.

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References:

- The School Bullying Council:
<http://www.schoolbullyingcouncil.com/bullying-statistics/>
1. Dan Olweus, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
<http://olweus.org/public/bullying.page>
 2. Helping Kids Deal With Bullies: http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/bullies.html#a_Advice_for_Kids
 3. National Association of State Boards of Education

ABIDING BY THE LAW:

New York State Law⁴ Bullying/Harassment

The Dignity for All Students Act (2010) Defines harassment and prohibits harassment of a student by employees or students on school property or at a school function. "School property" is defined in the statute. It also prohibits discrimination of students based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex by school employees or students on school property or at a school function. It requires the board of education and trustees of each school district to create policies and guidelines that must include the following: **1)** Policies intended to create a school environment that is free from discrimination or harassment,

2) Guidelines to be used in school training programs to discourage the development of discrimination or harassment and are designed to raise awareness, sensitivity and enable prevention and response of school employees to potential discrimination or harassment, and **3)** Guidelines relating to the development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods, requiring at least one staff member at every school be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex. It requires the Commissioner of Education to create a procedure for annual reporting of incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at a school function. The statute also provides immunity from liability for those reporting discrimination

or harassment of a student, when acting in good faith.

Education Law 2801-a (no date available) requires school safety plans to contain strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as creating a forum or designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence and establishing anonymous reporting mechanisms for school violence."

Cyber Bullying No state policy.

Hazing No state policy addressing elementary or secondary schools.